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An Essay upon Mania a potu

By

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In the whole catalogue of vices, there is not one which holds a more conspicuous station than that of intemperance in the use of ardent spirits; Both on account of its prejudicial influence upon the morals, as well as its ruinous effects upon the constitutions of those who unfortunately become addicted to it. It is indeed a cause of regret to see so many, who appear very wa endowed by nature to fill exalted and honorable stations in society, prostitute the most splendid talents and extensive acquirements at a shrine so detestable and debasing. Were I disposed to moralize upon this subject, I could collect a list of evils attending it that would fill a volume, But such is not my intention, which is merely to describe one of its most serious and fatal effects, and one which at the same time comes more immediately under the notice of the physician.

That disease which has been termed by various authors, "The Brain fever of drunkenness" "Delirium Tremens," "Mania à potu," "Mania à Temulentia" "Febris Temulentia" &c. &c. is the one which I have selected for the subject of this essay; The name I most approve and which I shall adopt is Mania à potu.

Mania à potu is most frequently to be met with

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in persons addicted to habitual drunkenness; But I have also known it to occur in persons, who although not in the constant practice of drinking to any excess, had perhaps in one or two instances been guilty of this species of debauchery to an inor=dinate degree, and this joined with some peculiar state of the system at the time, excited the disease, when probably under different circumstances it would have had no such effects.

It is the sudden diminution, or total abstraction of this inordinate excitement, that generally brings the disease into action. Could these miserable beings to use their own language, "taper off gradually," lessening by degrees the quan=tity of their drink, it is probable they would escape this dreadful malady; But in many cases the very last shilling perhaps has been expended for this poisonous article, proba=bly too at the expense of their regular and necessary food, and even this is likewise consumed; then between the cravings of hunger and the horrid feelings which they endure on being deprived of that stimulus, which from habit has become almost essential to their very existence, reason forsakes

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her throne, leaving them in that deplorable condition which forms the subject of this essay.

Spirituous liquors of every description are capable of producing this disease: But from the fact of its occuring almost exclusively among the lower ranks of society, whose drink consists for the most part of whiskey, I have thought it possible that this article produces the disease more frequent=ly than any other kind of liquor. This however is mere surmise, and if it should hereafter be proved to be the case, can be of but little practicle importance, as it would not in the least alter the plan of treatment.

As to the modus operandi of spirituous liquors in producing Mania à potu, it is by no means an easy task to explain, nor will I at this time attempt it; My intention at present is merely to relate the different symptoms attending it, as well as the various modes which have been practised for its cure, making such remarks on each, as from close observation I believe to be correct.

The first symptoms which the patient is

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troubled with at the commencement of an attack, are a sensation of lassitude, accompanied with slight chills or crawls, pain in the head, a sense of weight and op= =pression at the pit of the stomach, followed by nausea and vomiting. At this early period of the attack the bowels are generally constipated. The appearance of the face, that peculiar to the drunkard, very much flushed and bloated; The eyes are also much injected, and constantly rolling in all directions as if following or seeking some particular object. The tongue is always more or less furred, and generally moist, but sometimes it is exceedingly foul and dry; in fact I have seen the tongue of a person labouring under this disease, similar in every respect to that of a person with Typhus Fever. The pulse is generally frequent, sometimes weak and compressible, and at others it is quick, strong, and tense. The skin is generally cool and moist, but sometimes it is hot and dry. To these symptoms there is always added great nervous irritability, watchfulness and trembling of the whole body, but more particularly of the head and hands. The mind

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so [illegible] in the general [illegible] it becomes wandering and confused especially at night, and [illegible] in a [illegible] state. ———

[illegible] is to be observed [illegible] the [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible], [illegible] particular, from their [illegible] and that [illegible] during the night [illegible] the [illegible] of the [illegible], and of the [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] of [illegible]. It is with much difficulty we persuade that they [illegible] to [illegible] the beds [illegible] accomplishing [illegible] keep them then [illegible] [illegible] of the [illegible] the will immediately get up again, put on their clothes, put [illegible] will be fired and [illegible] the bed-clothes [illegible] this they will persist in doing, [illegible] [illegible]tations and threats. In some instances the imagination is [illegible] persons [illegible]; [illegible],

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[illegible] after it is with great [illegible],
the deformities that in nine cases out of ten the
result will be fatal. And we will know that
will not this is effected, [illegible] would take
place: but [illegible] recognise it is trivial and,
fortunately of this description [illegible] effects [illegible]
all. It is to be [illegible] from a [illegible] such perfect relief, and
devoid of their situation [illegible] perhaps [illegible]
[illegible] than [illegible] this [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] perfectly [illegible].

[illegible] to [illegible] of their [illegible],
[illegible] circumstances [illegible] constitution
as the one [illegible] constitution [illegible] patient,
manner of the attack [illegible] the [illegible] of the [illegible]
[illegible] with a constitution not so much
inflammation [illegible] continued course [illegible]
[illegible] when the attack [illegible] accompanied
also [illegible] much [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible]

But to the [illegible] Gout we [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] Dr Austin's Inquiries [illegible]
[illegible] physical inquiries [illegible] great [illegible],
[illegible] general dangers, or during the [illegible]
of the [illegible], the varieties incessantly [illegible]
[illegible] and produces in [illegible] a
operation most difficult to be calculated. But
confined diseases are particularly alarming
under [illegible] Hepatitis, some [illegible] organic
affection perhaps [illegible] the worst cases. —

The [illegible] cases [illegible]
[illegible] these six examinations of [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] à priori [illegible] [illegible] of the [illegible]
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[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

most usual termination, I have to [illegible] experienced [illegible] its [illegible].

As [illegible] all the [illegible] save [illegible] of this disease I shall next proceed to give an account of the different modes which have been adopted, for combating, and [illegible] it to a favourable result; and in doing this, I fear that I shall necessarily become somewhat tedious, as it is my wish to [illegible] fully into the subject.

Two methods have been adopted in [illegible] for [illegible] mania à potu. By the first it is [illegible] accounts as Emetics [illegible] according to their [illegible] and [illegible]: First [illegible] and the stimulant. This [illegible] to the cases [illegible] effected. Both [illegible] as then extended, [illegible] however efficacious in different cases, and to

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depressed state of the system. [illegible] proceed in the next place to point out the different circumstances [illegible] to [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] with Emetics. The use of this class of medicines is [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] associated with [illegible] of this art. [illegible] remarkable, that the [illegible] of [illegible] in [illegible] of [illegible] sick, [illegible] able to [illegible] [illegible] a [illegible] for [illegible] days before the [illegible] [illegible], and that [illegible] the [illegible] disease [illegible] the [illegible] was so [illegible] [illegible] of puking spontaneously [illegible] accidentally occurs [illegible] is [illegible] all the [illegible] [illegible] is [illegible] to the disease. By these observations I was [illegible] led into the following reasoning. If puking spontaneously [illegible] for several days and [illegible] is able to [illegible] [illegible] of the [illegible] the [illegible] of artificial Emetics produce similar good effects? Impressed with such ideas as these, as is generally the case with persons who think they have made some new important discovery, [illegible] be permitted to use the expression,

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[illegible] of [illegible] it would appear from repeated observation that cathartics are not to be ranked among the remedial means in the treatment of this form; and indeed they are but feeble auxillaries except in such cases as are attended with, and fomented by, some vitiated secretion. The majority of physicians however, look upon them as medecines of great value, capable of fulfilling [illegible] one of the indications [illegible] Emetics are used and unattended with any of those dangerous effects which have followed from the operation of the [illegible] [illegible] are the advocates for the employment of this class of medicines at the head of which is placed the most [illegible] Dr. Armstrong who says, that they should always precede the use of Opium; but [illegible] "If I had done [illegible] this precaution I believe that my success would have been great: But as I fell into the error of administering Opium in an early stage and neglected this remedy, I am most anxious that it should be corrected for the sake of others." His practice is thus applicable to occasional as well as habitual drunkards with this

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[illegible] all parts [illegible]
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[illegible]eeds to the [illegible]

[illegible] the [illegible] of the disease. In the advanced stages, [illegible] to [illegible] be [illegible]. The [illegible] most commonly used in these cases are [illegible] solution of hydrate of Castor oil [illegible]; [illegible] of obstinate constipation it becomes necessary [illegible] the [illegible] or [illegible] oils.

Venesection. This is practised by some physicians under a supposition that the brain is the principal seat of the disease, and as, in Frenzies, they consider blood-letting the best [illegible] and of allaying it. One of the strongest advocates for the use of the lancet in this complaint is Dr. Pettit of Baltimore. He has said "that in young subjects and even in patients advanced in life but recently attacked, we have frequently bled to the amount of sixty or seventy ounces; and several times in two, three or four days, after the [illegible] small portions only can be with safety taken; a very at[illegible] in the chapped state which almost always [illegible] the [illegible] of [illegible] and, there are exceptions

to this rule." —
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to this rule." — This is carrying the practice to a greater length than the most energetic practitioners of this city have ever dared, as far as I am acquainted. From what I have seen myself of this disease [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] have not been impaired by [illegible] [illegible] intemperance. Topical Bleeding [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] indeed [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] may be [illegible] [illegible] advantage. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] be small and the blood allowed to [illegible] as slowly [illegible] [illegible] the effect [illegible] produce.—

Blisters [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] but so far as I am capable of judging [illegible] little advantage. I have found them [illegible] [illegible] the nervous irritability, [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] watching &c. — As regards the administration

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] Opium. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

sea or castor oil

[illegible]

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[illegible]

Carbonate of Ammonia [illegible] Lime and Barely [illegible]

[illegible]

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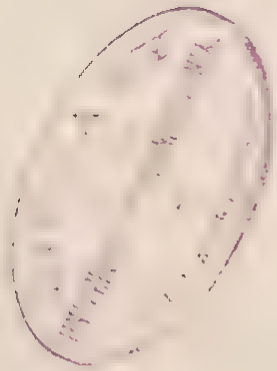

[illegible]

upon the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] in the treatment of such persons as have to [illegible] charge of patients in the absence. [illegible] all the things needed to keep the patient [illegible] a person to enter their room in other than [illegible] commands and to be [illegible] [illegible] the persons [illegible] [illegible] as expected from [illegible] and once seen with them: This I have [illegible] known to [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] tions [illegible] and [illegible] increasing the excitement. By [illegible] [illegible] of the [illegible] [illegible] the part of our treatment and [illegible] [illegible] the assistance of medicine [illegible] time. His plan was to confine the patient in a dark room till [illegible] he permitted no person to enter, he gave neither nourishment nor medicine until they had slept soundly. And it is said that his success was equal to that of almost any other practitioner. —— The diet of mania a potu patients should consist of light nourishment

kind of food such as rich cakes or sweets made rich with Spices wine &c, [illegible] food of all kinds should be carefully avoided as difficult of digestion and likely to act [illegible] [illegible].

Lastly, [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] should not be extended beyond the [illegible] [illegible] of people not only because it is most consistent with the best principles of economy, but it is also the most successful means of obtaining the [illegible] [illegible] effect [illegible] economy.

No 16 Q.

1825

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Mania a Potu.

Robert E Kerr